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REV. L. S. COAN'S
CENTENNIAL SERMON,
BOOTHBAY,
SEPTEMBER 23, 1866.



A Century in one of the Early New England Churches.

A

S E R M O N ,

DELIVERED IN THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

B O O T H B A Y , M A I N E ,

SEPT. 23, 1866.

BY LEANDER S. COAN.

Published by Request of the Society.

B O S T O N :

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THE publication of a Sermon embodying the History of a Century in one of our early New England Churches, requires no apology. Hoping that these pages may form an acceptable additional item to New England Ecclesiastical History ; that they may tend to awaken in the minds of whoever may read them, an interest in our old Churches ; I yield to the request of this Parish, and accept the advice of brethren in the ministry, whose opinion I sought, in giving this Historical Sketch to the public. Though few may read it now, in after years it will be useful.

L. S. C.

Boothbay, October, 1866.

Source unknown



S E R M O N .

DEUTERONOMY IV. 31.

HE WILL NOT FORSAKE THEE, NEITHER DESTROY THEE, NOR FORGET THE
COVENANT OF THY FATHERS.

ONE hundred years, on the 28th day of July last, had passed since Rev. JOHN MURRAY assumed the pastoral charge of this Parish. He entered upon his work, by dedicating the Old Meeting House, the inside of which, at that time, was unfinished. His text upon that occasion was, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." The frame of the house was raised the year previous, on the 27th day of September.

The day of dedication was a day of rejoicing. Those fathers had seen their children growing up in ignorance of religion. They were conscious that its power was dying out of their own hearts, as their record tells us. Often had they suffered from the savage cruelty of the tribes around them. Driven again and again from their homes, they had returned with a courage that always conquers. They had made vain appeals to the Presbytery at Boston, for supplies. Their only religious privileges, previous to 1763, had been when transient preachers had chanced this way.

According to a tradition prevalent here, the men who were thirty-five and forty years old, could remember that, when lads, they had heard that wonderful man, GEORGE WHITEFIELD, declare in the barns of their fathers the truths

of God. We may judge of their interest in him, when we know that Andrew Reed followed him all the way to Newburyport, for the sake of listening to his words. One winter, this same Mr. Reed, when all the rest fled in fear of the savages, remained alone till they, in the spring, returned. When they wondered at his daring, the brave old man answered,—“*What, had I not my Bible with me?*” Of such metal as this, was the old church made. But of this period I will let the Fathers speak themselves; for though dead, they yet speak in their Records, as well as in the Church, which remains till this day.

Extract from the Original Sessions Record.

“The Elders in Session voted, that a sessions book be purchased, and that the Clerk be appointed to record in it the history of the settlement of this Church, from the first beginning down to this time, which was done, brought in, and read, and is as follows:—

EARLY HISTORY.

“The inhabitants of this town, having long been harassed and distressed by the natural difficulties of settling a new country, without any considerable resources of wealth, and more especially by frequent wars with savages on the border, by which the settlement was repeatedly broken up, and the whole place laid waste; had hardly recovered strength enough for the settlement of the Gospel amongst us, and therefore, *had long been languishing under the heavy affliction of silent Sabbaths*; various preachers, ’tis true, we from time to time had opportunity to hear, both here and in the neighborhood; and various applications were made by us to the Reverend Presbytery of Boston, for supplies; but all were treated with utter neglect; and now no hope remained of any settlement of the Gospel here. The people, dispirited by long and fruitless attempts, sat down in inactive despondency. But in the midst of this gloomy prospect, their minds were

relieved by the arrival of Rev. John Murray, a probationer from Ireland,—drawn hither by repeated invitations from one of the principal settlers* of this place.

“Upon his preaching to general acceptance for some time, the inhabitants held a meeting at the house of Mr. Beath, where they unanimously voted to give him a call to be the settled pastor of this town. A paper was subscribed, and put into his hand, as follows:—

“‘We the subscribers do promise to pay to the Rev. John Murray the sum of Ninety Pounds Sterling, per year, as an encouragement to settle amongst us as our Pastor. ‘Townsend, this 22d day of December, 1763.’ Beside which they particularly engaged to give him a lot of land, of two hundred acres; to build him a house; to clear and labor said lot; cut and haul his firewood yearly;—and for this purpose a subscription was set on foot, and the Lord *spirited up the people*, so that it was quickly filled up. Now were their hopes very sanguine, that the long wished-for day had come.”—*Original Record*, p. 8.

But Mr. Murray was discouraged by the prospect. As yet they were not a town, and hence were not legally bound to fulfill their agreements. And so he was determined upon an immediate return to Ireland, and took his leave the February following, going to Boston. They chose a committee to follow him there, to prevail upon him, if possible, to remain. They at last extorted from him a *promise that, if he ever returned to America, and they still vacant, and still desirous of him, and should renew their call, Townsend should be the place of his settlement*. Whereupon they returned, elated at this much gained, while Mr. Murray proceeded to New York, to embark for Ireland. There he was stayed by a call from the Presbyterian Church in that city. While considering this, he received another from the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. Of these occurrences he sent timely infor-

* Mr. Andrew Reed, before mentioned.

mation to this place, and the people replied by repeated and vigorous renewals of their proposals. These, however, did not reach him, and he, supposing that he had been forgotten, accepted the Philadelphia call, and was settled there. Soon after this he received the intercepted messages, one of which bears date, as transcribed to the Records, February 7, 1765; another, March 11, 1765; and another bearing date, October 2, 1765, which is as follows:—

An Argument for the Return of Mr. Murray.

“To the Reverend the First Presbytery of Philadelphia,—the humble supplications of the inhabitants of Townsend, now the town of Boothbay,* humbly sheweth; that your petitioners dwell in a country that has long been harrassed by Indian wars, the inhabitants frequently driven off their settlements, and stript of all their worldly substance, and thereby, ever since their first settlement, have been unable to have the Gospel supported amongst us until this time; by which means a wide extended country of many miles in extent, in which there are many towns and districts populous enough to demand the labors of a minister each, have been hitherto scattered as sheep without a shepherd; whilst the aged are daily weakened in every religious impression, iniquity abounding, the love of many waxing cold; and the youth, the only hope of succeeding generations, the only prospect of a church in the coming age, are growing up awfully ignorant of God, of Christ, and of themselves; and while their souls, precious as they are, are perishing for lack of knowledge, it is to be feared, will also be *growing* in carelessness and indifference about eternal things. Sealing ordinances so rarely to be had that hundreds, amongst whom are adults not a few; yea, whole families, root and branch, have never been offered to God, in Baptism. Our situation is so remote, our circumstances so peculiarly discouraging, that

* They had thus, we see, been incorporated as a town, between 1763 and 1765, probably in '64.

no hope appeared of any supply for our necessities, until in the midst of our desolation, it pleased God to direct this way the Rev. Mr. John Murray, whom we unanimously called to take the pastoral care of our souls; and although he could not then accept our call, yet he promised that if he ever settled in America he would be our minister. Yet, notwithstanding this promise, of which we find you were not ignorant, you have taken him away, and set him over another congregation. Our many letters to him we deemed sufficient to establish what we have before transacted; but by what means they never reached him we are left to guess. On all which accounts, we think our expectations unjustly disappointed, and ourselves greatly injured, and we can but judge that we have good ground to plead our right to said Mr. Murray to be our minister, in virtue of that promise, which, in justice to ourselves, we can never give up. We therefore beg that your wisdoms would be pleased to consider our case, and as Judges in the Church of Christ, determine what is justice in it, and grant us the redress which is our due. Boothbay, October 2, 1765." Signed by upwards of sixty heads of families.

This argument met the reception which we might reasonably expect from the body of men that had performed this injustice. But this tribunal was not the ultimate, and from it the petitioners appealed to the New York and Philadelphia Synod—the higher Ecclesiastical Court. Meanwhile Mr. Murray came to Boston, on his way to Ireland; ill health detained him, and the Commissioners from this place met and treated with him there.

In their petition of appeal to the Synod, they again stated their former arguments, and added another item of petition, for the following reasons:—Confident that their petition must prevail, they considered * * * "the next business was to provide for the most easy and convenient mode of settling Mr. Murray, at Boothbay," * * * also "considering that, as Mr. Murray belonged to no body of min-

isters in this Province, and that they are surrounded only by such as are of the Independent form, it might be very troublesome and expensive to said town to bring together as many Presbyterian ministers, in connection with him, as might make a Presbytery, capable of solemnizing his settlement here; considering also that, as the solemnities of ordination can be performed but once to the same man among Presbyterians; that installment being nothing else than the bargain or covenant between minister and people, whereby they propose and he accepts—he takes the charge and they engage submission; therefore, it is very consistent with reason, and the nature of things, and very agreeable to the Presbyterian discipline, to hold that covenant fully confirmed without those formalities; and understanding that it is the frequent practice of the Presbyteries and Synods in the Southern Provinces, to ordain ministers at large, and settle them where ever Providence may call; yea, that this is now the case with ministers even in the cities of New York and Philadelphia,—for all these reasons the said Commissioners did transmit, with these papers, a petition to this purpose:—

“‘To the First Presbytery and their Synod,’” repeating former petition and argument, adding, “‘that when Mr. Murray is removed from Philadelphia, it will please you to constitute him our minister *at once*; that he may be transported to his charge of this town without any formal installment; and your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

‘Signed by

‘ANDREW REED,

‘ANDREW MCFARLAND,

‘March 16, 1766.

‘Commissioners.’”

This petition prevailed, and Mr. Murray was released fully, freely, and in the form desired. He arrived here, and at once assumed his charge; his first public act being the dedication of the meeting-house, July 28, 1766. According

to the arguments of the petitioners, and the usages admitted by the Synod, his official connection with this Parish began then. And that day, July 28th, is the proper anniversary day of this Church—for an element of the Presbyterian Church was formally acknowledged by such an assumption. If Mr. Murray ever occupied the pastorate here, the beginning was at that time.

The Great Revival.

During the ensuing autumn and winter, followed the Great Revival, which left its mark upon the community, giving it its peculiar susceptibility to religious influence. The experiences of those men in those days could not but have a shaping influence. Whether their descendants are in the church of their father's choice, or are in others that have long since appeared, they cannot escape from the wholesome bent of those early days. The account of those seasons in the book of Records, too long for quotation here, reminds one of the Apostolic days, when the Holy Ghost was breathed upon men. And the First Church here has a rich legacy in being the natural heir, the lineal descendant of the church, then formed.

Immediately upon his arrival here, Mr. Murray proceeded to gathering and recognizing the individual members of the Presbyterian Church, who were living here. Having ascertained who held certificates of membership, as they had been living here for years without oversight, he proceeded to a sort of informal process of discipline, to ascertain if any were improper subjects to receive the Sacrament. Accordingly on the 10th day of March following, he publicly announced the names of the Presbyterians, solemnly adjuring the whole congregation, if they knew of any reason why these were not entitled to the sacred rites of the church, if they would not be guilty of the blood of souls, to declare the same. This was repeated three Sabbaths in succession. Then upon the last, and fifth Sabbath of March, no charges

having been brought against any of them, he announced that in two weeks the Communion would be observed. Accordingly on the second Sabbath in April, the 13th day,—they celebrated for the first time, the sublime service of the Lord's Supper. The names of those persons are inserted in the Appendix. They now had their pastor, but were without the other proper church officers.

Ordination of Church Officers.

On the 20th day of the September following, the Ruling Elders and Deacons * were ordained by Mr. Murray. The day of their ordination was Wednesday. The scene, as described by the clerk, was very impressive. They took seats in the broad aisle. The church was crowded by a solemn audience. The candidates were then publicly examined, charged ; the congregation called to look upon them ; they were then called to stand forth, and were caused solemnly to declare, before God, that they would faithfully fulfill the duties of their office.

The town was divided into districts, and two of these were appointed to each district, of which they, under the Pastor, were to have oversight. Of the whole, the Pastor had a general supervision. And thus organized, this band of determined and praying men began not only the battle with sin in their own hearts, but in the community. Then truly had the people a mind to work. They appreciated, as you never can, the privileges they thus came to enjoy. No more can we understand what was their intense delight, than we who every day enjoy home, with food and clothing sufficient, can appreciate the joy of the wrecked sailor, when after days alone

* William Moore, Robert Murray, John Beath, Nehemiah Harrendon, were Ruling Elders. Israel Davis, Samuel Adams, Ephraim McFarland Deacons. Of this body, Mr. Murray was Moderator, and John Beath was Scribe. It is probably to him that we are indebted for so clear an account of their proceedings at that time and before; a record that would be an honor to the pen of any man, in any age.

on the raft, he is clothed and sits down to a proper repast. Truly the people had a mind to work for God, and the walls of Zion went up. Hand to hand they labored, foot to foot they went. In the dreary past they stood against their savage foe with a rifle in one hand, a spade in the other, with the Bible and prayer in their hearts. And so God blessed their labors.

Present State of the Record.

The record of the church up to March 12, 1770, is full and complete. From that time to the year 1798, we have nothing except the tabular record of admissions, and baptism of infants, attached to which are dates, showing that through this period ordinances were occasionally if not constantly enjoyed.

The record that is preserved goes over but five years of Mr. Murray's administration. So we have no official statement of the time when his labors ceased here. But it is known that he left here during the first part of the war of '76. In the town treasurer's record I find that there was money paid to Rev. Mr. Murray, in 1777. After that year no such minute appears. In the year 1777, in the month of September, Mr. Murray succeeded in preventing a menaced attack upon the settlement at the Harbor, by Commodore Collyer of the British frigate Rainbow, forty-four guns. We learn from Collyer's published account of his visit to these waters that Mr. Murray sent notes to him, and also had interviews with the commander. Thus we see that Mr. Murray's stay here as pastor, was a little less than twelve years. From this place he removed to Newburyport.

Subsequent History of the First Pastor.

He always manifested a lively interest in this place, and came hither every four or five years to baptize the children born after his regular labors ceased. The last sermon that he preached here was on the occasion of the funeral of Miss Nancy Flood, a young lady who had been drowned. The

funeral was from the house of Capt. John Reed. He was very much moved by the occasion. He was impressed that he would never see them again; said he, "I must preach my own funeral sermon." He solemnly warned them all. It was indeed his last discourse here. He died in Newburyport, March 13, 1793, aged fifty-one. This would show him to have been twenty-one years old when he first came to this country, twenty-four when he was settled, and to have lived sixteen years in Newburyport, where he was buried. Seventy-three years ago that faithful servant went to his reward. Though dead he yet speaketh. This pulpit, yes, every pulpit in town, bears witness to the seed that he cast into the minds and hearts of the people.

Personal Appearance and Characteristics.

Mr. Murray was of ordinary height, five feet six or seven inches, exceedingly broad across the shoulders and deep through the chest. He was of a clear florid complexion, inclined to corpulency in later years. His voice was of the heavy, massive cast, and clear as a trumpet.

He possessed the power to fascinate the most cultivated audiences, as well as to hold those hardy frontiersmen bound by the spell of his eloquence. And it was the Master's call of duty, "Come over into Macedonia and help us," that took him from the first churches of the country to labor in these then wilds. Long ago that eloquent voice was hushed in the grave, and his faithful helpers are all, all slumbering here in this old burial yard. The grey moss grows now over their slanting tombstones. Their children and their children's children also. But their loved pastor is not here. He rests near Whitefield, I know not how near, but they should be side by side.

From Mr. Murray to Father Sawyer.

In the interim between the close of Mr. Murray's pastorate and the beginning of Mr. SAWYER'S, as the record is gone,

through that period, we have to depend entirely upon tradition. I can learn of only two laborers. Mr. *Gould*, an uncle of Mr. Gould who preceded Rev. Jonathan Adams, labored about six months. Of the results of that period we have no account. Mr. *Chapin* also preached here about five years. There were besides, other occasional laborers, but who they were I have not learned. The only clue to this period is the table of baptisms, the dates of which show that the ordinances were occasionally, at least, observed.

MR. SAWYER'S ADMINISTRATION.

At a legal town meeting, Nov. 6, 1797, it was voted unanimously to give Rev. JOHN SAWYER a call to settle here in the ministry. Nov. 21st, the church, by their committee, also gave him a call. He came to town with his family the following March. He found the church in a disordered state, from having been so long without a settled pastor. It was still professedly Presbyterian, but as there was no Presbytery with which they could unite, it was thought advisable to form a new and Congregational church, — the members of the old, uniting with their pastor in calling the assistance of the Lincoln Association for this purpose. Thus they became nominally what they had ever been in fact. They had always been independent in their action. No Presbytery or Synod ever had any jurisdiction over them. They were the same as any independent church joining an Association.

Mr. Sawyer preached his last discourse, Oct. 13, 1805, remaining here seven years. He began his labors in the most difficult period in our history. A difference arose between pastor and church, upon the question whether the women should be present when candidates were to be examined for admission. The pastor contending for, the church, at least a majority, against. There were also troubles in the matter of discipline. Failing to bring the church to his position, he also failed to prevail upon them to call a mutual council. This left him only the course of calling an ex parte council,

which he did. This council sustained him, and subsequently the church passed a unanimous vote of concurrence therewith.

From this place Father Sawyer went into the Penobscot valley as a missionary. I need not repeat that he was one of the original founders of the Theological Seminary at Bangor. He lived to see this institution a flourishing one, far exceeding in importance and results even his most sanguine hopes when he took initial steps toward instructing young men who proposed to enter the ministry. The town of Garland, in Penobscot County, was the place of his residence for many of the last years of his life. And there he was buried.* He lived till he was nearly one hundred and four years of age.

Jabez Pond Fisher was the next settled pastor. He was with the people eight years. Nothing of especial interest marks this period. He was the last pastor in the first half century.

Mr. Weston's Ministry.

The beginning of the second half century was marked, like the first, by a revival of great power. Rev. Mr. Weston, who is still living, was pastor. His was the longest pastorate, ex-

* The home of the writer of this account was in the same town, and some reminiscences of that remarkable man may be interesting, and perhaps not out of place in this connection. Any one who passed his house often, would see him sitting by the window reading, reading, and always the Bible. 'Every year made it dearer,' was what he used to say. At the advanced age of one hundred, he could readily read ordinary print without glasses. As long ago as the writer can remember, it was the same old man; the same tremor in his voice, the same silvery white hair, of fourscore years. Little did he think, when twenty-five years ago he placed his hand on a little head in my father's house, and with trembling voice pronounced his blessing, that destiny would lead the child in the place of the old man's footsteps here. The impression that his voice and manner, his whole person, left upon one childish fancy will never be effaced. The trembling of his withered hand over the Word of God, the trembling of his voice as he declared its truths, seemed like warnings from the spirit world.

cept Mr. Murray's, and was equal to that in length, if not in important results. Mr. Weston found the church in a very disheartening condition. Again iniquity abounded, and the love of many waxed cold. It is forty-nine years, lacking two days, since Mr. Weston preached his first sermon here, and this afternoon he will probably preach his last. Some of you, those who can count your three-score, can remember the solemn scenes in the old meeting-house when you were children. Perhaps some of you were then first conscious of sin. But the most of those who then found the priceless pearl, have gone where it glitters in the Sun of Righteousness, while their bodies sleep among the fathers and mothers of the first half century, beneath grass-grown mounds. What a harvest has the great reaper gathered! How many of Mr. Weston's stars have gone before him, and are now waiting to welcome him and lead him to the Lamb of God, saying, "Behold thy servant, Lord, who led us to thee on earth; we now lead him to thee in heaven." As Mr. Murray was the father of the first fifty years, Mr. Weston was of the last.

Charles L. Cook was called Aug. 10, 1830, ordained Oct. 6th, dismissed and deposed Oct. 31, 1832. This strange man has gone to his reward. It is said, whatever was his life, that he died a good man. Since he has gone to God's tribunal, it is useless to bring him again before man's.

Rev. Nathaniel Chapman was next a supply; he was called, but refused the call.

For some time *Henry A. Merrill* was a supply.

Rev. David Cushman was installed in January, 1838. Mr. Cushman's labors extended over a period of about five years. Another of the greatest revivals that the town has ever witnessed was enjoyed by this church in 1840, beginning near the close of the second year of his ministry. Full accounts

of this work were published in the 'Christian Mirror' that same year, and the letters are copied into the records, where any one who desires can read them.

Rev. Mr. Tobey was the next in order, and one of the ablest preachers that was ever in the place. He too has ceased from his labors, and gone where the weary are at rest, — where a prying inquisitiveness will not trouble itself because he is shut up in contemplation of eternal truth.

Rev. Mr. Gould was the next supply, coming in June, 1848, and laboring about three years. Mr. Gould is still living, and is supplying the church in Albany, in this State. It was during his labors that the Second Congregational church was formed. Its members, and those of the old, look back to a common source, together sharing the honor of the past.

Following Mr. Gould, *Rev. Jonathan Adams* began his labors in 1852. The last minute in his handwriting bears date 1858. The last nine months of his engagement were filled by *Rev. Jonathan E. Adams*, his son, just then graduated from Bangor.

This aged servant of God has also gone to receive his crown. His life and labors are so fresh in your memories, and obituaries of his life have so recently been published, that I will not attempt to epitomize what even those of you who are young know better than myself.

The next and last preacher, except the present, was *Rev. Horace Toothaker*. He remained three years, removing then to New Sharon, where he is at present.

The whole number of pastors, acting and settled, has been eleven. Average length of service, six years and one month. Whole number of settled pastors, five. Average length of settlement, eight years and seven months.

There have been about fifty years of settled ministry, about fifty years of stated and transient supply, about ten years of which, there was no supply.

There have been in all between six and seven hundred members in the two churches. And many removing from here have subsequently made profession in other places.

Thus we have an epitome of the history of a century in one of the oldest churches in this State. I have dwelt specially upon its early history, as comparatively little is known of those facts in this generation. For many reasons, so patent to all that we need not give them here, it is fitting to revive these forgotten incidents.

There are some points of interest to every one who thoughtfully considers this history, that it may be well to notice in closing.

1. The first impression one receives in reading those early accounts, is of the united ability and piety of those men. The piety that kept them faithful to the interests of our holy religion was eminent, and is seen in their lives as well as the principles which they maintained. Their wisdom, which was unusual, was equal to their piety. They understood the importance of a right beginning; and had the foresight which enabled them to see the bearing which their deeds would have upon coming time. Many early settlers only looked to present results; they took into account future as well. They were not only able men, but they were educated also. The account of those times and deeds is not only graphic, but it is portrayed with such brevity, elegance, and fitness, that one is not hazardous in affirming that it cannot be excelled. Where they were educated I do not know, but sure we may be it was somewhere. And it is a shame, and a loss to community, that the evidences of this are hidden in the torn records of those days, far gone, fast going towards decay, and liable to entire destruction. Every student of New England history would be interested in those men, aside from

the interests of religious history. It goes to show the character of the early settlers of New England. We do not need to be told that the blood of the family of Mary, Queen of Scots, was among those families, to know that there was royal manhood there. Nature and God gave them a better title to nobility.

2. We to-day can partially if not fully estimate the importance of the work which they accomplished. Heaven and eternity alone can fully develop their importance and influence. How many have already gone up higher, how many shall yet go, none of us can know; but we know there are already many who, under God, trace their salvation to them.

But there are results that we can see, effects that we can estimate — that are evident to any observer.

The religious susceptibility of this community, the fact that a large part of the people believe in the pure and undefiled religion of the Bible, is traceable directly to the founders of the First Church. What if they had been infidels, — would religion and morality have been characteristics of their descendants?

Not only the old church which still exists has been influenced by them. Every pulpit in the place is a witness to their faithfulness and the beneficial results of the principles which they held. Why is it that pulpits, churches, school-houses, and general sobriety and intelligence characterize the community, rather than breweries, dancing halls, grog shops, and ignorant drunkenness? Another community of five thousand inhabitants, — the number inhabiting what was Townsend, — cannot be found, from New York to Eastport, so free from these evils to which I have referred, as is the section in which the Congregationalist Church for years was the only means which God used for good. The foundations of religion in this community were then laid.

It is fitting in view of these facts, to remark of the spirit that should exist between the different religious orders in this

place. The living, vital members, not only of our church, but every other church in the community, learned to pray from fathers and mothers whose home was in the old church. This should be a bond of brotherhood between you all. There is work enough for all to do, opportunities sufficient for each to bid all a hearty "God speed you." And while the blood of those fathers flows in the veins of praying men, they ought so to live that it might be said of them, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." And the most and best, I believe, sincerely do. And members of sister churches must be willing that we, who are in sympathy with the principles and doctrines of the old church, shall be allowed to point to the honor which we inherit, and not consider that we would cast any reflections upon the new homes in Christ where they choose to worship.

3. A debt of gratitude, to the latest generation, will be due from every believer in Christ, to God and those noble men. Thanks we will to-day give Him whose purpose was to rear and keep the First Church even until this day; thanks that His blessing has been with it. Is not God's providence with it? Had it been "Babel," as a sectarian fanatic once declared, it would have "come down," but being Zion, and built upon Christ, it has stood, and now begins with increasing strength, its second century.

4. While the whole community, all religious orders here, are blessed by the good results of the principles, polity and deeds of those early men, it remains to those who are faithful to the same, to be the special recipients of their rich legacy. And I can but believe that if they could speak to-day, they would with special delight give honor to those of their children who are faithful to their doctrines as well as their deeds, which time has proved so beneficial. The influence of Puritan Congregational principles is not confined to this community. What is true here is true in the whole country. The form of Government, in which every American has a laudable, patriotic pride, is the gift which independ-

ent churches gave the country. When the early fathers saw how well the democratic principle, that the majority should rule, worked in ecclesiastical affairs, they said this is best for civil government also. And so they formed towns, counties, States, and a Union on the same independent principles that they had formed their Congregational churches. The early churches of New England, of which this was one, are admitted by all historians to have been the mothers of New England liberty and New England education. Every church was a Christian republic, and the result was that our nation, when it was born, became a Republic also. We who hold still to the same principles in our religious government that we do in civil, who hold to the same that those fathers did, ought not to lose sight of this great fact, and it is proper to make the most of it. Let us not be slow to claim these principles that God has so signally blessed. If others, who reap common benefits with us, are ready to sacrifice their control of church affairs and choice of preachers, let us not surrender the independency of church government. The Saviour is our only Bishop, and the Bible our only Discipline.

These principles, doctrines then, are the special legacy of the fathers to us as a church. Had they and others held differently, not only this place but America would have been different. It is a legacy in which we are honored. We will cast no reflections upon other churches,—if you choose to forsake these principles it is your privilege. We will give you all honor for the good you have done, and it is much, and if you worship Christ will cordially greet you as brethren; but while we do this you must not chide us that, in view of God's blessing upon our own Christian home, and what it has accomplished, we give it the first place in our hearts.

5. Are there not special duties that devolve upon the possessors of this inheritance?

It is our manifest duty to accept the teachings of God in his providence. He has in so marked a manner set his seal

of approval upon the faith and deeds of those early men, that we ought to emulate their example.

What was their strength? They believed in God. They also believed in Christ. They believed that man needs a Saviour, and that he will perish without Him. They believed the plain teachings of the Bible, and twisted not its words to suit the whims of fancy or error. They were inclined to expunge the seventh chapter of no book from the Bible. That book was the Word of God to them. They believed that God is still somewhat interested in the course of affairs in this world. They believed that God has a special cause, and that he will carry it forward to its fulfillment. They were ready to trust him, and what was equally important, they were ready to obey as well as trust. They worked. Their idea of God's providence kindled an active faith that prompted to active obedience. They believed in God's providence, but not in man's improvidence, either in spiritual or temporal affairs. The result we see. And our duty is manifest. To follow in their faith, and, as they followed Christ, in their footsteps. Emulate their lively faith and zeal. Be in earnest not only that the real work of grace shall be in our hearts, but also in the hearts of those around us, relying ever upon the Holy Ghost. They were not afraid to use that broad Bible term, nor did they fail to believe implicitly in Him, as the third person, who, with the Father and the Son, was their one God.

What changes have transpired since then! If they were permitted to return and journey from here to New York, think you they would not conclude they had, by mistake, visited the wrong world? It is in everything, except the sky, sea, and land, another one. Where there were then log cabins, in and around which was a hard struggle for daily bread, they would find what they would have deemed princely affluence, but which is now within the reach of every industrious man. They would ask with surprise, "Where are the savages?"

Instead of a little band of Colonies on the Atlantic coast, struggling for existence against England and the natives, they would find a nation of which England stands in fear, while she courts us as an ally. They might journey from Maine to the Golden Gate, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf, and hear their grandchildren say—"My country!" How would the thunder of the rattling train startle them, and how the shrill scream surprise! On the sunset side of our land, they would find gold, as rich and yellow as the rays of the sun upon mountain and stream at sunset. They would find oil flowing from the very earth to light their homes and lubricate the machinery of countless and mysterious industries. And from that same Golden Gate, they could flash to their old homes, in a moment's time, the strange surprise that would thrill them. Yea, more; sitting there, on the extreme verge of the New World's civilization—which only stops there because of no more wilds to conquer, and sits down in peace to adorn and enrich itself with gold that has been torn from Nature's granite fastnesses—there they could read of an evening the account of events that transpired in the heart of Europe two days before; events that shook the Papal throne they had learned to hate, now tottering in insecurity, beneath the imbecile relic of an age gone by. And all this would journey to them there, over the vine-clad hills of France, down through the historic Channel, over the Nation of the Georges, down and on, swift as thought itself, beneath the great sea, speeding among its unseen wonders; up again upon our granite headlands, on over the great Republic, to stand, tamed and unpanting, patiently upon the printed page, telling its strange tale to those wondering eyes.

How would the sight of countless churches and colleges gladden them! Harvard and the Old South, have been fruitful mothers. They would find that other Pilgrims than the first, are now at Plymouth Rock. They would find the Bible revered, the cause of Christ held sacred, and

Liberty loved, as they have never before been in any land beneath the sun—though our devotion thereto is far short of what it should be. And thanks they would give, that God has made his cause keep pace with this unparalleled growth of a nation. No other has ever accomplished as much of every desirable good in eight hundred and ninety years as we in eighty-nine. God has some purpose in this; it is not chance that His cause has not fallen behind in this century's march down through the ages. No, it is not chance, nor even man's wisdom. Do you think your place and duty small? The whole is made up of parts. A nation's honor depends upon the honor of individuals. Be a faithful, liberty-loving citizen of this our land—be a faithful, praying member of Christ's true Church—and to be an American, is greater than to have been a Roman citizen.

The blessings which have come to us, I firmly believe, have come because our nation's early fathers believed in God, and builded upon that foundation which is Eternal Truth—God, Christ, with power to pardon and punish; the Holy Ghost; these three, ever One God,—if these are not *the Truth*, there is no Truth. For if there is no God, and no revelation, Death *is* Death, and the grave is worse than a Hell.

We are just stepping upon the borders of our second century. When in one hundred years from now, they look back, what shall they have to record of us? Will we have been worthy of the past, equal to the future? Not one who is here to-day, will in this house celebrate the second centennial anniversary. More than another burial-yard will be full, and the moss will be growing over the marble dates of 1866, '67, '68, and through to 1966. Somewhere yours will be; and on that day they will visit this old yard, to find here, graves two and three hundred years old,—there, those of a hundred years,—and your names will catch the eye of the curious, and none of them will ever have seen you.

Mothers, fathers, and children, alike, will all have gone down in the harvest of death. All the while our hearts,—

“Like muffled drums are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.”

O, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, that brings Life and Immortality to Light, in the face of Him who “lifted up His hands at Bethany, and blessed them!” Oh, Thou risen Redeemer of dying men, we *will* worship Thee with great joy.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACT FROM MR. MURRAY'S JOURNAL.

Account of Pastoral Labor.

“Alas! alas! What shall I say? I now fear the success of my ministry more than ever. Make Thy strength perfect in my weakness. Oh, pour out Thy Spirit upon these poor families, that they may not forget the promises this day made in Thy sight,—that Thy worship shall be daily, morning and evening, maintained in their houses,—and they shall never rest until they have received Christ into their hearts. A dismal prospect truly! All prayerless—all ignorant of God and themselves—all determined to cherish their hopes,—though I have found but two who can rationally profess any experience of the power of religion. Some of the English Church,—some separatists,—most of them nothing at all. Arise, O Lord, or this people perish! O, show Thy salvation to them, revive thine own work, or we are an undone people!”

After another week he writes: “Now this week’s visits are finished. What have I done? Have I been faithful? O, if so, in any measure, praise my Rock, my Strength! All have promised to be in earnest about salvation. O Lord, I commit the whole to Thee. Breathe on my poor, feeble attempts,—grant success, ’tis all of Thee. O come among this blind, hardened, perishing people. What triumphs would grace gain, if such sinners were brought home. Every house prayerless, save one—every heart as adamant. O Lord, for a life-giving word!”

Again, and later: “Some comfort to-day—blessed be God. Three prayerful families; four professors; two communicants;—but false hopes have slain their thousands. Woful is the security of fig-leaves. *Very hard and painful work* to bring any to conviction of duty, of sin, or danger. Prayerless, yet self-condemned. Christless, confessedly, yet easy and secure. Ignorant, and pleading that as righteousness. I have had sad views of ignorance and carelessness in every house. Youth wrapt in slumber, and old age saying by practice, ‘sleep on’—conscience in a corner inaccessible. What



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